

Historical Time Line of Woman Suffrage in the United States

Sponsored by the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission
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- 1776 Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John Adams, asking him to "remember the ladies" in the new code of laws. Adams replies the men will fight the "despotism of the petticoat."
- 1777 Women lose the right to vote in New York.
- 1780 Women lose the right to vote in Massachusetts.
- 1784 Women lose the right to vote in New Hampshire.
- 1787 US Constitutional Convention places voting qualifications in the hands of the states. Women in all states except New Jersey lose the right to vote.
- 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft publishes *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in England.
- 1793 Lucretia Mott is born in Nantucket, MA.
- 1807 Women lose the right to vote in New Jersey, the last state to revoke the right. Women Join the Abolitionist Movement
- 1815 November 12: Elizabeth Cady Stanton is born in Johnstown, NY.
- 1818 August 13: Lucy Stone is born in West Brookfield, MA.
- 1820 February 15: Susan B. Anthony is born in Adams, MA.
- 1821 Emma Willard founds the Troy Female Seminary, the first school to offer girls classical and scientific studies on a collegiate level.
- 1828 English woman Frances Wright is the first woman to address an American audience composed of both men and women.
- 1830's Formation of the female anti-slavery associations
- 1833 Oberlin College is founded as the first coeducational institution of higher learning.
- 1836 Angelina Grimke appeals to Southern women to speak out against slavery.
- 1837 Mount Holyoke, the first college for women, is founded by Mary Lyon in South Hadley, MA.
- 1838 The "Pastoral Letter of the General Association of Massachusetts to the Congregational Churches Under Their Care" is promulgated against women speaking in public against slavery, it is mainly directed against the Grimke sisters.
- 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other women barred from participating on account of their sex. Women Begin to Organize For Their Own Rights
- 1845 Margaret Fuller publishes *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, which has a profound influence on the development of American feminist theory.
- 1847 February 14: Anna Howard Shaw is born in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England.
- 1848 July 19: The first woman's rights convention is called by Mott and Stanton. It is held on July 20 at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, NY. August 2: A reconvened session of the woman's rights convention is held at the Unitarian Church in Rochester, NY. Amelia Bush is chosen chair, and becomes the first woman to preside over a meeting attended by both men and women. New York State Legislature passes a law which gives women the right to retain possession of property they owned prior to their marriage.
- 1849 Elizabeth Blackwell graduates from Geneva College in Geneva, NY with the first medical degree awarded to a woman.
- 1850 Women's rights convention held in April in Salem, Ohio. First national women's rights convention held in October in Worcester, Massachusetts.
- 1851 Amelia Bloomer publishes in her Seneca Falls newspaper, *The Lily*, a description of a comfortable, loose-fitting costume consisting of a short skirt worn over pantaloons. Even though the outfit was first worn by Elizabeth Smith Miller, it becomes known as the "Bloomer." Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony meet and begin their fifty-year collaboration to win for women their economic, educational, social, and civil rights. Sojourner Truth delivers her "And Ain't I a Woman Speech" at the Woman's Rights Convention in Akron, OH.
- 1853 Antoinette Brown Blackwell, an 1847 Oberlin graduate, is ordained as the minister of the First Congregational Church in Butler and Savannah, NY. She is the first woman to be ordained in the United States by a mainstream denomination.
- 1855 Elizabeth Cady Stanton makes an unprecedented appearance before the New York State Legislature to speak in favor of expanding the Married Woman's Property Law.
- 1859 January 9: Carrie Chapman Catt is born in Ripon, WI.

- 1861 Annual Women's Rights conventions held in Albany, New York lobbies for a liberalized divorce bill. Horace Greely opposes the bill, which loses.
- 1863 Stanton and Anthony organize the Women's Loyal National League and gather 300,000 signatures on a petition demanding that the Senate abolish slavery by constitutional amendment.
- 1866 The American Equal Rights Association is founded with the purpose to secure for all Americans their civil rights irrespective of race, color, or sex. Lucretia Mott is elected president. To test women's constitutional right to hold public office, Stanton runs for Congress receiving 24 of 12,000 votes cast.
- 1861-1865 Civil War. Over the objections of Susan B. Anthony, women put aside suffrage activities to help the war effort.
- 1867 Fourteenth amendment passes Congress, defining citizens as "male;" this is the first use of the word male in the Constitution. Kansas campaign for black and woman suffrage: both lose. Susan B. Anthony forms Equal Rights Association, working for universal suffrage. Suffrage Movement Divides Over Black v. Woman Suffrage
- 1868 Stanton and Anthony launch their women's rights newspaper, the Revolution, in New York City. Anthony organizes the Working Women's Association, which encourages women to form unions to win higher wages and shorter hours. The 14th amendment to the U. S. Constitution is adopted. The amendment grants suffrage to former male African-American slaves, but not to women. Anthony and Stanton bitterly oppose the amendment, which for the first time explicitly restricts voting rights to "males." Many of their former allies in the abolitionist movement, including Lucy Stone, support the amendment. Formation of New England Woman Suffrage Association. In New Jersey, 172 women attempt to vote; their ballots are ignored.
- 1869 Frederick Douglass and others back down from woman suffrage to concentrate on fight for black male suffrage. National Woman Suffrage Association formed in May with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as president. American Woman Suffrage Association formed in November with Henry Ward Beecher as president. In England, John Stuart Mill, economist and husband of suffragist Harriet Taylor, publishes On the Subjugation of Women. Wyoming territory grants first woman suffrage since 1807. Civil Disobedience Is Tried
- 1870 Fifteenth Amendment ratified. The Grimke sisters, now quite aged, and 42 other women attempt to vote in Massachusetts, their ballots are cast but ignored. Utah territory grants woman suffrage.
- 1871 The Anti-Suffrage Society is formed. Victoria Woodhull addresses the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives arguing that women have the right to vote under the 14th amendment. The Committee issues a negative report.
- 1872 Susan B. Anthony and supporters arrested for voting. Anthony's sisters and 11 other women held for \$500 bail. Anthony herself is held for \$1000 bail.
- 1873 Denied a trial by jury, Anthony loses her case in June and is fined \$100 plus costs. She refuses to pay. Suffrage demonstration at the Centennial of the Boston Tea Party.
- 1874 Protest at a commemoration of the Battle of Lexington. In Myner v. Happerstett the US Supreme Court decides that being a citizen does not guarantee suffrage. Women's Christian Temperance Union formed.
- 1876 Stanton writes a Declaration and Protest of the Women of the United States to be read at the centennial celebration in Philadelphia. When the request to present the Declaration is denied, Anthony and four other women charge the speakers' rostrum and thrust the document into the hands of Vice-President Thomas W. Ferry.
- 1878 Woman suffrage amendment first introduced in US Congress.
- 1879 Belva Lockwood becomes the first woman lawyer admitted to practice before the Supreme Court.
- 1880 Lucretia Mott dies in November. New York state grants school suffrage to women.
- 1882 The House and Senate appoint select committees on woman suffrage, both report favorably.
- 1884 Belva Lockwood runs for president. The US House of Representatives debates woman suffrage.
- 1885 January 11: Alice Paul is born.
- 1886 Women protest being excluded from the dedication ceremonies for the Statue of Liberty. Suffrage amendment reaches the US Senate floor, it is defeated two to one.
- 1887 Utah women lose right to vote. The first three volumes of the History of Woman Suffrage, edited by Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, is published.
- 1888 The International Council for Women is founded and holds its first meeting in Washington, DC.
- 1890 After several years of negotiations, the NWSA and the AWSA merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone as officers. Wyoming joins the union as the first state with voting rights for women. By 1900 women also have full suffrage in Utah, Colorado and Idaho. New Zealand is the first nation to give women suffrage.
- 1892 Susan B. Anthony becomes president of the NAWSA.
- 1893 October 18: Lucy Stone dies. Matilda Joslyn Gage publishes Woman, Church and State. After a vigorous campaign led by Carrie Chapman Catt, Colorado men vote for woman suffrage.

- 1894 Despite 600,000 signatures, a petition for woman suffrage is ignored in New York. Lucy Stone dies, 1818-1984.
- 1895 Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes The Woman's Bible. Utah women regain suffrage.
- 1896 Idaho grants woman suffrage. Suffrage Activism Enters the 20th Century
- 1900 Anthony resigns as president of the NAWSA and is succeeded by Carrie Chapman Catt.
- 1902 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, born in 1815, dies.
- 1903 Carrie Chapman Catt resigns as president of the NAWSA and Anna Howard Shaw becomes president.
- 1906 Susan Brownell Anthony, born in 1820, dies.
- 1907 Harriet Stanton Blatch, Elizabeth's daughter, forms the Equality League of Self Supporting Women which becomes the Women's Political Union in 1910. She introduces the English suffragists' tactics of parades, street speakers, and pickets.
- 1910 Washington (state) grants woman suffrage.
- 1911 California grants woman suffrage. In New York City, 3,000 march for suffrage.
- 1912 Teddy Roosevelt's Progressive Party includes woman suffrage in their platform. Oregon, Arizona, and Kansas grant woman suffrage.
- 1913 Women's Suffrage parade on the eve of Wilson's inauguration is attacked by a mob. Hundreds of women are injured, no arrests are made. Alaskan Territory grants suffrage. Illinois grants municipal and presidential but not state suffrage to women.
- 1914 Montana and Nevada grant voting rights to women. Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organize the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage.
- 1916 Alice Paul and others break away from the NASWA and form the National Women's Party.
- 1917 Beginning in January, NWP posts silent "Sentinels of Liberty" at the White House. In June, the arrests begin. Nearly 500 women are arrested, 168 women serve jail time, some are brutalized by their jailers. North Dakota, Indiana, Nebraska, and Michigan grant presidential suffrage; Arkansas grants primary suffrage. New York, South Dakota, and Oklahoma state constitutions grant suffrage.
- 1918 The jailed suffragists released from prison. Appellate court rules all the arrests were illegal. President Wilson declares support for suffrage. Suffrage Amendment passes US House with exactly a two-thirds vote but loses by two votes in the Senate.
- 1919 In January, the NWP lights and guards a "Watchfire for Freedom." It is maintained until the Suffrage Amendment passes US Senate on June 4. The battle for ratification by at least 36 states begins.
- 1920 Henry Burn casts the deciding vote that makes Tennessee the thirty-sixth, and final state, to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment.

August 26, 1920

The Nineteenth Amendment is adopted and the women of the United States are finally enfranchised 144 years AFTER the US Constitution guaranteeing equality under the law was written.

- 1923 At the 75th anniversary of the Seneca Falls convention, Alice Paul proposes an Equal Rights Amendment to remedy inequalities not addressed in the 19th Amendment. Many states continue to bar women from jury duty and public office. Widows succeed their husbands as governors of Texas and Wyoming. Middle-class women attend college and enter labor force. Anticipated "women's vote" fails to materialize by end of decade.
- 1933 Frances Perkins is appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as first female Secretary of Labor. In the New Deal years, at urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Democratic women's leader Molly Dewson, many women gain positions in federal social service bureaus, including Mary McLeod Bethune, director of the Negro Affairs Division of the National Youth Administration.
- 1936 Federal court rules birth control legal for its own sake, rather than solely for prevention of disease.
- 1941 United States enters World War II. Millions of women are recruited for defense industry jobs in war years and become significant parts of labor force. WAC and WAVE are established as first women's military corps.
- 1947 Percentage of women in the labor force declines as women leave jobs to get married and to make way for returning soldiers. By end of decade, numbers of working women are again on the increase.
- 1952 Democratic and Republican parties eliminate women's divisions.
- 1955 Civil Rights movement escalates in the South; Septima Clark and others lead sit-ins and demonstrations, providing models for future protest strategies.
- 1960 FDA approves birth control pills.
- 1961 President's Commission on the Status of Women is established, headed by Eleanor Roosevelt. Commission successfully pushes for passage in 1963 of Equal Pay Act, first federal law to require equal compensation for men and women in federal

jobs.

- 1963 Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* articulates dissatisfaction about limits on women.
- 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits job discrimination on the basis of race or sex and establishes Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to address discrimination claims.
- 1966 National Organization for Women, founded by Betty Friedan and associates, promotes child care for working mothers, reproductive rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and "full participation in the mainstream of American society now."
- 1972 After nearly 50 years, Equal Rights Amendment passes both houses and is signed by President Richard Nixon. Civil Rights Act bans sex discrimination in employment and education. Shirley Chisholm is first black American to run for president.
- 1974 Ella Grasso of Connecticut becomes the first woman Governor elected in her own right.
- 1981 Sandra Day O'Connor is appointed first woman U.S. Supreme Court justice.
- 1982 Deadline for ERA ratification expires; final count is three states short of adoption.
- 1984 Geraldine Ferraro is first woman from a major political party nominated as Vice President.
- 1991 Senate confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas as U.S. Supreme Court justice and testimony of Anita Hill raise awareness of sexual harassment.
- 1992 More women run for and are elected to public office than in any other year in United States history.

Today The fight for equality is waged on many fronts; women are seeking political influence, better education, health reform, job equity, and legal reform. The demands echo those of the movement throughout its history. In 1848 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and others claimed on behalf of American women "all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens." What would the reformers from Seneca Falls do today to contribute toward a future of equality? What will you do?